2: Hudson E-4, 5 (1936) 1938 RQ2 Kazak RQ2

THE FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

THE FAMILY

In discussing the nature of the Kazak uru it was noted that genealogically speaking Kazak society consisted of a series of blood related groups divided and subdivided into units of more and more closely related individuals. These units were all called uru. It becomes of interest to consider how small a group, for genealogical purposes, may be considered to form an uru. My informants were unable to decide for some time whether, for example, a man and his immediate family could be described as an uru. Such a usage of the term, it developed, would certainly not be common although in theory it might be permissable. It would require all the descendants of a man for several generations, said Tlenshiev—just how many he did not know, perhaps five or six—to form an uru, which would comprise a hundred houses or more. The basic uru would consist of the blood members of the group customarily occupying common winter quarters which broke up for the summer migrations into a series of family groups.

The individual family was known as yj, meaning literally "house." The members of the family, the inhabitants of the "house," would normally be a man, his wife or perhaps wives, and minor children. As his sons came of age and married they would be provided with kibitkas adjacent to their father's;[1] then the father's kibitka became known as the ylken yj, (senior or great house) and the son's kibitka as otav (junior or small house). Originally, according to Kuftin,[2] otav meant "without fire."[3] Thus there might be four or five otav around the senior kibitka. The youngest son would continue to live in the senior house which he inherited at the death of his father.

Such was the normal, or more accurately, idealized arrangement. Actually many families were not able to afford such extensive premises and several sons with their wives might continue to occupy the father's house. If three generations lived in one kibitka the grandfather and his wife slept on the left, son and son's wife on the right with grandchildren, guests and allothers in the middle. If a son and his wife were living in the kibitka, especially a newly married son, his section might be separated by a curtain, not apparently for the observance of any avoidance custom but merely for the sake of privacy.[4] The left hand side of the kibitka as one entered was considered the most honorable and was reserved for the master of the house. As far as I could learn this principle was not extended to the winter dwelling; there the head of the household took what he considered the warmest and most comfortable place, the others making out as best they could.

[1] Zaleskie, *La Vie des steppes*, 18–19.

[2] *Kirgiz-Kazaki*, 34.

[3] In connection with the family fire compare the quotation from Potdneev on pages 77–78.

[4] See also Karutz, *Unter Kirgisen und Turkmenen*, 70.

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592 Among prosperous families the number of kibitkas occupied by its members might be
595 quite large. In addition to a separate establishment for each of the older sons those who could afford to do so had additional kibitkas for each wife and her children.[6] Radlov[7] mentions that a rich Kazak might have kibitkas in several different places with a wife and children in each among which he divided his time.

595 In general, however, most Kazak were obliged to rest content with one wife because of the financial outlay involved in acquiring additional ones. By Mohammedan law a man was allowed four wives but this restriction seems to have been treated lightly by those who could afford to do so. Tlenshiev knew, or at least had heard of, a man with forty wives.

The senior wife, the first one married (bəjbice) was nominally the mistress of the household and dominated the others (toqal or kici əjel[7]). The degree to which the senior wife actually controlled her juniors varied considerably with circumstances and the personalities involved. Levshin remarks[8] that even when the husband had no particular affection for her he was obliged to respect her and compel the other wives to do so. Zaleskie[9] points out, however, that the position of even the senior wife depended to a great extent upon the caprice of the husband. He describes a journey from one camping place to another in which the favored wife of the moment, mounted on a horse, led the procession in which others followed on camels, while she who was in disgrace at the time brought up the rear on foot, as the ultimate humiliation. My informants explained that the chief cause of friction within the household was that the senior wife delegated the heaviest and most disagreeable tasks to the junior, while she herself was jealous of the sexual preference shown by the husband for her younger colleague. On the other hand, according to Karutz,[10] the senior wife in some cases, especially if she were childless, would herself select a younger wife for her husband in order to have children in the family and assistance with the domestic chores. Grodekov says that in case of continual quarrels among several wives of a man the local judge (bij) might intervene and apportion the various household goods, furnishings and utensils among them in order to keep the peace.[11]

593 Of the general position of women in the Kazak family there are conflicting points of
562 view. Radlov[12] considered them as rather worse off than among the Kalmyk who, of course, were not Mohammedans, and thought that the Kazak treated his wife as his property because he had bought her at a high price. Domestic quarrels were frequent and the husband customarily addressed his wife in a harsh commanding voice. Levshin[13] remarks that the

[6] See also Levshin, *Description des hordes*, 363; Zaleskie, *La Vie des steppes*, 24.

[7] *Aus Sibirien*, 1: 484.

[7] Toqal is a somewhat rude term translatable perhaps as "wench." Kici əjel is preferable, meaning simply "younger wife."

[8] *Description des hordes*, 363.

[9] *La Vie des steppes*, 24.

[10] *Unter Kirgisen und Turkmenen*, 113–14.

[11] Dingelstedt, *Le Droit coutumier*, 151.

[12] *Aus Sibirien*, 1: 484.

[13] *Description des hordes*, 373.

biological progeny, or on the fusion of two descent lines, which is more complicated. According to this process, one village or lineage or clan may leave its ancestral camps and pasturages and request admission into another. The host clan agrees, accepts the newcomers not as guests but as kinsmen, and gives them a fictional genealogy and fictional kinship relations. These relationships have both religious and social significance.[1] In religious terms the fictions are needed to make the guests acceptable to the local and ancestral spirits; in social terms, these kinship relations are the social relations—or at least they were until recently, and they still exert a strong influence today. A fusion of two descent lines in this manner results from fission or cleavage within one descent line; this fission may be caused by quarrels between two leaders, or by loss of herds which may cause a kinship group to break up, leaving one segment to seek admission into another group.

Fictional kinship extends also to slaves. A certain amount of slavery existed for debt or for punishment of criminals, but most of the slaves, who were never a numerous group, were captives taken in feuds and wars.[2] Such captives did not remain slaves long, as a rule; they were either put to death, or freed and accepted into the civil life of Kazakh society. If freed, they were given a fictional kinship status which soon became blurred over and indistinguishable from the rest of the society.

These are in broad outline the traditional patterns of Kazakh society. They must be borne in mind in order to understand many of the ideological and doctrinary battles between Moscow and the Kazakhs, especially Kazakh leaders.

FAMILY AND VILLAGE LIFE

The Kazakh family is by nature an extended family, composed of a man, his wife or wives, his sons and their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters. If the family is rich, it may also have further kin, both married and unmarried, who are poor and maintain themselves by working for the rich. The rich family may also contain servants who are not directly related at all, and finally slaves. The typical households, however, consist only of close kin.[3]

The authority in the family is patriarchal, resting ultimately in the hands of the father or the eldest of several brothers.[4] The authority passes from father to eldest son, or if there is no son, to the eldest surviving male of the immediate family, such as a brother or nephew. The authority of the patriarch is extensive—over women and children it is all but absolute—but it is subject to certain limitations. If it is noticed that a father is squandering his patrimony in idleness or frivolous undertakings, the village elders may remonstrate with him, and

[1] Hudenko *et al*, 1930, pp. 59-60; Valikhanov, 1904, pp. 291-292.
[2] Levshin (85), 1840, p. 330.
[3] Kharuzin, 1889, pp. 107-108; Imeretsov, 1897, pp. 1-2.
[4] Valikhanov, 1904, p. 286.

may even place the authority in the hands of an adult son, if he has one, or a brother. Recourse to such action may be taken only rarely, but it is nevertheless a recognized delimitation of paternal powers. The parental authority over the son serves as the model for all authority patterns in Kazakh society, such as those involving the village elder, the clan leader, the beg, and the khan.[1]

In the past the parental authority was limited in another sense; the family was part of a village which camped and pastured its herds in common. The leaders of the village decided when and where to camp, when to change camp, when to break up the winter concentration of herds and families and move to the more dispersed spring and summer pastures.[2] A family head disobeyed these decisions at his risk. It was to his interest to follow them, since he gained many things thereby: fellowship, social position, protection from dangers by weight of numbers, assistance in time of need. The village in turn was subordinate to the clan authority if there was one. In case of raids, feuds, or other breaches of the peace, a village leader would appeal to the clan chief for aid. In a dispute between villages, a village elder would appeal to his clan chief for a judgment in his favor.

The village elder was the judge of his community, and decided all cases, usually with the support of the other senior men of the village. Appeals from their decisions were rare, defiance of their decisions even rarer. Behind the judgment of the village leader and the other elders lay the force of social solidarity, the weight of the entire village; defiance meant ejection and flight. Defiance of father by the son had similar consequences. The ultimate authority rested with the khan, if there was one, and if he cared to use his power, for he backed his authority with an army and the right of punishment by death or imprisonment, in addition to the force of his position.

The Kazakh household could include several wives if the position and wealth of the master allowed it. In one community studied, the Adai lineage on Mangyshlak peninsula, half the men had only one wife and half had two. In general, very few families contained more than two wives, although there is in theory no upper limit on the number of wives (exclusive of concubines) that a man can have. The ideal number of wives in princely families was considered to be five or nine—in contrast to the ideal number of wives for Moslems which the Koran gives as four. The family and marriage patterns of the Kazakhs are among the traits which give a pronouncedly non-Islamic coloring to their society.[3]

A youth was given his own tent and appurtenances when he came of age; traditionally he was soon to be married, and in fact a substantial number were married by the time they were 20 years old. Even as late as 1926, 222 out of every 1,000 males were married by that age, and in former years the rate was higher. The tent was not identical with the household unit. A young married couple with children did not

[1] Izvestov, 1897, pp. 5, 11.
[2] Radloff (104), 1893, p. 513; Rudenko et al, 1930, pp. 4-8.
[3] Kovtz (73), 1910, p. 42.

live as an independent unit, even though they had their own tent; the group was still part of the husband's father's household.[1]

Extensive studies done in the early 1920's by Rudenko describe the family life among Kazakhs of the Middle Horde. In one aul or nomadic village, there were 13 tents in a line. Five of the 13 "belonged" to the head of the aul, and of these three contained women; that is, three were tents of married persons, for women received tents only on marriage. Rich auls were small, with few families; poor auls were large, with many families joining in their poverty. One such poor aul contained 60 families; Samoilovich describes a richer grouping of 505 tents in 100 auls of three to eight tents each.[2]

Very little information is available on the size of households or the extended family. Samoilovich gave 2,408 as the number of individuals living in the 505 tents, or 4.76 per tent.[3] Equating tents with married couples, but also allowing for bachelors and childless couples in some tents, one can infer a high fertility in this particular community. This account is one of the very few detailed demographic pictures of a small community of Kazakhs living in the traditional fashion. It is difficult to generalize from such a description, but one gets a sense of the direction such figures are likely to take.

In Turkic nomad communities there are generally fewer women than men; a ratio of 900 females to 1,000 males exists among Kazakhs. The Kirgiz and the Yakut of Northern Siberia present a similar picture. Among these people, however, men tend to marry late in life, while social norms dictate that women marry early. This is shown by the fact that, in 1926, 41 out of every 1,000 Kazakh males reached the age of 40 unmarried, while only three out of every 1,000 women were still single at 40. More than 75 per cent of the women married by the age of 20; Kazakh men reached that percentage only in the age group 30-34. Hence there is actually a surplus of women seeking marriage, and this allows for a certain amount of polygamy, since a woman will marry a man who already has a wife rather than remain unmarried.

As noted before, the extended family is patriarchal in character; authority is vested in the senior male of the household. All decisions rest with him, and rarely can appeal be made beyond his word. The entire society centers around the father-son axis, the central point of the marriage life and family happiness is the bearing of a son. The son is the assurance that the line will be continued; on a larger scale, this pattern of descent in the paternal line is the web that holds the society together. This is an extreme case of a father-son oriented society. Few of the factors which tend to modify strict patriarchal control in other societies can be seen here. The Chinese and the Japanese have a patrilineal family system, but in these societies, although the father is the center of authority, the mother is the center of a different circle of emotion, one of love and warmth, and the family life involves both circles.

[1] USSR Census 1926, vol. 54.
[2] Rudenko *et al*, 1930, p. 311.
[3] Samoilovich, in Rudenko *et al*, 1930.

221 noontime. Then another such march is taken, so
361 that on the average /341/ the nomads move about forty versts in 24 hours, if there is no reason to hurry or to slow down.

595 Among the Kazakhs, as Moslems, there is
●592 polygamy, but since the support of the wives and the payment to their parents for their purchase is quite burdensome, Kazakhs only rarely have two or three wives, while many have four (sic). The poor, however, have only one wife for the most part. Usually the oldest brother in the family has several wives. He is also the head of the family while it is living together, and his first wife directs the entire household. This wife is called 'baibicae and not only are the other wives of her husband subordinate to her, but also all the female members of the family. Often the head of the family sends off part of the herd under the leadership of this wife for several hundred versts, and remains himself around the plowed land and his young wives, or else leads a nomadic life with the other part of the herd separately. In the winter, however, they travel together.

428 Inheritance. Usually the Kazakhs divide the inheritance while still alive with their grown sons, either upon their marriage or shortly thereafter. In all cases the rule is observed that the children of each mother receive an inheritance only from the estate of their mother, and not from the dowries of the other wives of their father. Also, after the death of the husband the wife keeps exactly her part of the dowry. The daughters are given in marriage, and after that they have no right to inheritance from the father if there are sons.